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House impeaches Trump; Senate will not rush trial

J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE AP

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi gavels the final vote of the impeachment of President Trump for his role in inciting the Capitol riot.

BY DAVID MORGAN AND RICHARD COWAN
Reuters

WASHINGTON

The House of Representatives voted 232-197 on Wednesday to make Donald Trump the first U.S. president ever to be impeached twice, formally charging him in his waning days in power with inciting an insurrection just a week after a violent mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol.

Ten Republican lawmakers joined 222 Democrats in voting for the article of impeachment over an incident that represented a deadly assault on American democracy.

But it appeared unlikely that the extraordinarily swift impeachment would lead to Trump's ouster before the Republican president's four-year term ends and Democratic President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated on Jan. 20. The Senate's Republican majority leader, Mitch McConnell, rejected Democratic calls to convene the Senate in emergency session to begin an immediate impeachment trial.

Trump's impeachment trial in the Senate will not begin until next week, McConnell said on Wednesday shortly after the House vote, setting the stage for a partisan brawl in Biden's first days in office.

"Even if the Senate process were to begin this week and move promptly, no final verdict would be reached until after President Trump had left office. This is not a decision I am making; it is a fact," McConnell said in a statement. He will no longer be the Senate majority leader then.

The House on Wednesday passed a single article of impeachment — a formal charge — accusing Trump of "incitement of insurrection," focused upon an incendiary speech he deliver-

SEE IMPEACHMENT, 2A

Could McConnell's signal to Republicans open floodgates against Trump?

BY DAVID CATANESE
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WASHINGTON

Sen. Mitch McConnell's openness to convicting Donald Trump in a U.S. Senate impeachment trial is a seismic signal to his caucus that could prod other Republicans to break with the president in the coming days and weeks.

While McConnell has remained largely silent since last week's riot of the U.S. Capitol, those close to him have anonymously conveyed through media reports that the outgoing Majority Leader is ready to wash his hands of Trump and that he sees the impeachment process as a ready-made solvent.

Jim Kessler, a former policy aide to incoming Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, said McConnell's smoke-signal gives other Senate Republicans permission to abandon Trump.

"Whether they take that permission, I don't know," said Kessler. "But between both McConnell and Rep. (Liz) Cheney, this can no longer be seen as a partisan endeavor. That just changes this dramatically."

A Democratic-led U.S. House voted to impeach Trump for the second time in 13 months on Wednesday, charging the president with "inciting an insurrection" after a mob of Trump supporters stormed the nation's Capitol last week, vandalized the building and sparked a security lockdown that de-

SEE MCCONNELL, 2A

'Tragic,' says Beshear as state virus death toll nears 3,000

BY ALEX ACQUISTO
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Gov. Andy Beshear announced 4,560 new cases of COVID-19 in Kentucky on Wednesday and 47 coronavirus-related deaths as the state continues its troubling post-Christmas climb in infections.

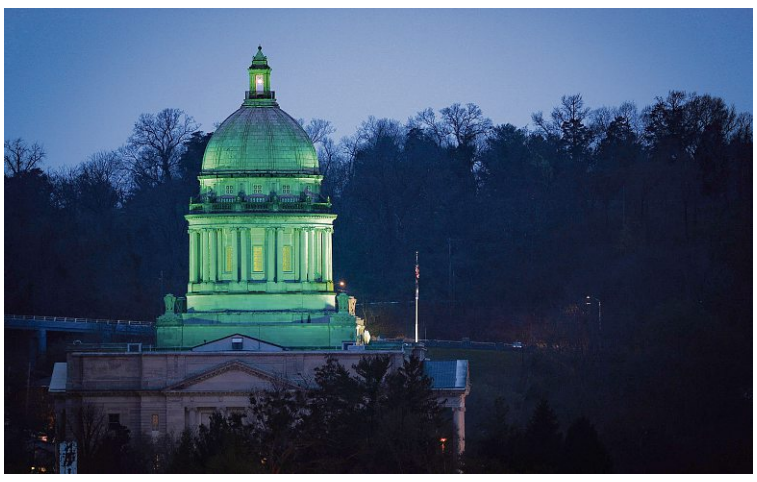
Wednesday's new case tally is the fourth-highest single-day increase, and the number of deaths makes it the third most fatal day since the beginning of the pandemic.

The statewide case total has reached 313,282 and the death toll, 2,991. The state's positivity rate is at 12.29 percent. It has hovered above 12 percent since Saturday.

The governor, in a brief update, noted how the state's death toll is teetering on the edge of 3,000. "That is tragic. We need to wear masks," he said.

Referencing a spate of Republican-sponsored bills before the General Assembly that challenge the governor's emergency orders meant to curb spread of the coronavirus, Beshear said, "We need to follow the rules and restrictions, and now is not

SEE COVID-19, 8A



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The state Capitol is illuminated in green on March 27 to honor Kentuckians who died from COVID-19. The death toll is now 2,991.

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